

REMARKS

Claims 1-9 are pending. By this Amendment, claim 7 is amended.

Claim Objections-Allowable Subject Matter

With appreciation, it is noted that the Office Action indicates claims 3, 8, and 9 as containing allowable subject matter. However, because Applicant believes that base claims 1 and 7 are in condition for allowance, Applicant traverses the objections to claims 3, 8, and 9, and elects not to rewrite these claims by this Amendment.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6, and 7 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Nagae et al. (U.S. Publication No. 2004/0004397) in view of Kokuryo et al. (U.S. Publication No. 2007/0138868). Claim 5 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Nage et al. and Kokuryo et al. and further in view of Staudt et al. (U.S. Publication No. 2002/0042858).

Claim 1 recites, among other things, a feature of a state holding means, connected to the detection means, for generating a hold signal held at a voltage that is the same as that of the detection signal and for outputting a completion signal indicating that shifting to the at least one of the operation states has been completed in accordance with at least one of the detection signal, provided from the detection means, and the hold signal.

The Office action acknowledges that a feature of claim 1, namely the state holding means (16) generating a hold signal held at a voltage that is the same as that of the detection signal, distinguishes over Nagae et al. As will be explained below, at least that same feature of claim 1 also is a distinction over Kokuryo et al., and thus over its combination with Nagae et al.

The Office action asserts that Kokuryo et al. teaches a holding circuit comprising a booster circuit (capacitor) that holds an input voltage at the corresponding voltage (paragraph 0067). However, the booster circuit (capacitor 55) of Kokuryo et al. is connected to a detection means 20 via an I-V converter circuit 24. This arrangement suggests that a detection signal of the detection means 20 is I-V converted by the I-V converter circuit 24 and thereafter the I-V converted signal is held in the capacitor 55. Accordingly, the voltage held by the booster circuit (capacitor 55) of Kokuryo et al. is not the same as that of the detection signal of the detection means 20. Hence, the noted feature of claim 1, namely “a state holding means, connected to the detection means, for generating a hold signal held at a voltage that is the same as that of the detection signal and for outputting a completion signal indicating that shifting to the at least one of the operation states has been completed in accordance with at least one of the detection signal, provided from the detection means, and the hold signal”, is a distinction over Kokuryo et al., and thus over its combination with Nagae et al.

Among other things, a *prima facie* case of obviousness must establish that the asserted combination of references teaches or suggests each and every element of the claimed invention. In view of the distinction of claim 1 noted above, at least one claimed element is not present in the asserted combination of references. Hence, the Office Action fails to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness vis-à-vis claim 1. Claims 2, 4 and 6 ultimately depend from claim 1 and so at least similarly distinguish over the asserted combination of references.

Newly amended claim 7 recites, among other things, a feature of a hold circuit, connected to the unlock sensor, for outputting a hold signal held at a voltage that is the same as that of the unlock detection signal. For at least the reasons discussed in claim 1, the noted feature of claim 7 is a distinction over Kokuryo et al., and thus over its combination with Nagae et al.

In view of the foregoing discussion, the rejection of claims 1, 2, 4-6, and 7 is improper. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned if the Examiner believes it would be useful to advance prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,



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